

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An exposure apparatus which exposes a substrate by irradiating exposure light onto ~~at~~the substrate via a projection optical system and a liquid, comprising:

a liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system that supplies the liquid; and

a measuring device which measures a time during which the supply of the liquid from the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system is stopped.

2. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the supply of the liquid from the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system is restarted when the stopping time exceeds a predetermined allowable time.

3. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system comprises a flowpath that supplies the liquid, and

the predetermined allowable time is determined taking a proliferation time of bacteria in the flowpath into a consideration.

4. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the exposure light is irradiated onto the substrate with an end face of the projection optical system contacting the liquid; and

the predetermined allowable time is determined taking a drying time of liquid ~~stack~~adhered to the end face of the projection optical system into a consideration.

5. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the predetermined allowable time is determined such that impurities do not

~~stick~~adhere to the end face of the projection optical system due to drying of the liquid on the end face.

6. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the supply of the liquid from the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system is restarted such that the end face of the projection optical system contacts the liquid.

7. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 2, further comprising a substrate stage which holds the substrate; and wherein,

when the predetermined allowable time is exceeded, the supply of the liquid from the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system is restarted with the projection optical system being arranged facing a flat section of the substrate stage.

8. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the supply of the liquid from the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system is restarted with the substrate or a dummy substrate held on the substrate stage.

9. (Original) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the liquid is pure water.

10. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system comprises a flowpath that supplies the liquid and a valve for opening and closing the flowpath; and

the stop of the supply of the liquid from the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system is determined from an operation of the valve.

11. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system comprises a flowpath that supplies the liquid and a flow meter that measures an amount of flow of the liquid along the flowpath; and

the stop of the supply of the liquid from the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system is determined based on a measurement result of the flow meter.

12. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the supply of the liquid from the liquid supply ~~mechanism~~system is restarted with the projection optical system facing a predetermined object.

13. (Original) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein the object comprises a stage which can move along the end face of the projection optical system.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a device ~~the manufacturing~~ method comprising:

~~using~~transferring a pattern onto a substrate with the exposure apparatus according to ~~Claim 1.~~Claim 1; and

processing the substrate to form the device.

15. (Currently Amended) A maintenance method of a projection optical system which projects an image of a pattern via a liquid, comprising:

measuring an elapsed time from when an end face on an image surface side of the projection optical system becomes in an immersed state to when ~~it~~the end face becomes a non-immersed state.

16. (Original) The maintenance method according to Claim 15, further comprising wetting the end face on the image surface side of the projection optical system with the liquid when the elapsed time exceeds a predetermined allowable time.

17. (Original) An exposure method comprising:

exposing, by using a projection optical system maintained using the method according to Claim 15, a substrate to light by projecting an image of a device pattern via liquid onto the substrate.

18. (New) The exposure apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein a controller of the exposure apparatus takes a corrective action when the measured stopping time exceeds a predetermined stopping time.